



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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WENDY L. WATANABE  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

August 5, 2013

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe  
Auditor-Controller

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Wendy L. Watanabe", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY HISTORICAL  
LANDMARKS AND RECORDS COMMISSION**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Audit Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors (Board) to extend the Los Angeles County Historical Landmarks and Records Commission's (HLRC or Commission) sunset review date to June 30, 2018.

The Audit Committee instruct the Commission to obtain Board approval on the Commission's meeting frequency.

**BACKGROUND**

The Board established and has continued the Commission pursuant to Los Angeles County Code Chapter 3.30. The Board approved the most recent sunset review date extension in March 2006.

Consistent with the County Code, the Commission considers and recommends to the Board local historical landmarks defined to be worthy of registration by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, either as "California Historical Landmarks" or as "Points of Historical Interest," and may comment for the Board on applications relating to the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission reviews applications for sites in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Pursuant to Section 26490 of the California Government Code, the Commission is designated as a historical records commission to foster and promote the preservation of historical records. The Commission is also designated as the County's memorial plaque review committee to screen applications for donations of historical memorial

plaques and recommending to the Board plaques worthy of installation as County property.

The HLRC has five members, one appointed by each Supervisor. Commission members are not compensated for their service. The Executive Office of the Board estimates that they spent approximately \$1,140 for staff support, parking, and services and supplies during Fiscal Year 2010-11.

### **JUSTIFICATION**

The HLRC met 13 times between January 2010 and April 2013 (approximately four times a year). The County Code does not specify how often the Commission should meet. Instead, County Code Chapter 3.30.070 gives the Commission, subject to the approval of the Board, the authority to decide how often it should meet. Since the Board has not approved the Commission's meeting frequency, we cannot comment on the number of meetings the Commission held during the review period. For the 13 meetings the Commission held, we noted that an average of 3.4 (68%) members were present.

During this review period, the Commission's accomplishments included:

- Consulting with the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) regarding historic preservation programs in other cities, methods of identifying historical structures/resources, historic preservation ordinances, and the feasibility of establishing a Mills Act program (Program) for the unincorporated areas of the County. The Program allows local governments to contract with owners of qualified historic properties for property tax relief in exchange for restoring and maintaining their historic properties. On May 28, 2013, the Board indicated its intent to amend the County Code to establish the Program and to authorize the Commission to comment on the Program's guidelines and application materials.
- Recommending that the Board approve and submit the Old Leona Valley Schoolhouse application to the State Office of Historic Preservation for designation as a California Point of Historical Interest. On November 13, 2012, the Board approved the Commission's recommendation.
- Commenting for the Board on the application for the Bass House to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Reviewing and approving, per the Environmental Impact Report approved by the Board, the design development plans for the Golden Gate Theater in the unincorporated area of East Los Angeles for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Commission's objectives for the next review period are to:

- Consult with DRP regarding the application materials and guidelines for the Program.
- Develop guidelines for recommending memorial plaques to the Board.
- Continue to recommend to the Board local historical landmarks worthy of designation as a "California Historical Landmark" or as a "California Point of Historical Interest," and commenting for the Board on applications relating to the National Register of Historic Places.

Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Robert Smythe at (213) 253-0101.

WLW:RS:TK

Attachment

c: Louis E. Skelton, Chair, Historical Landmarks and Records Commission  
Twila Kerr, Acting Chief, Commission Services

**COMMISSION SUNSET REVIEW**  
**HISTORICAL LANDMARKS AND RECORDS COMMISSION**  
**REVIEW COMMENTS**

**Mission.** (Does the mission statement agree with the Board of Supervisors' (Board) purpose and expectations?)

The stated mission is as set forth in the ordinance establishing the Historical Landmarks and Records Commission (Commission). **CONCUR.**

**Section 1. Relevance.** (Is the mission still relevant and in agreement with the Board's purpose and expectations?)

Consistent with the County Code, the Commission considers and recommends to the Board local historical landmarks defined to be worthy of registration by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, either as "California Historical Landmarks" or as "Points of Historical Interest," and may comment for the Board on applications relating to the National Register of Historic Places. Pursuant to Section 26490 of the California Government Code, the Commission is designated as a historical records commission to foster and promote the preservation of historical records.

The Commission's mission appears to be **RELEVANT.**

**Section 2. Meetings and Attendance.** (Are required meetings held and is attendance satisfactory?)

The HLRC met 13 times between January 2010 and April 2013 (approximately four times a year). The County Code does not specify how often the Commission should meet. Instead, County Code Chapter 3.30.070 gives the Commission, subject to the approval of the Board, the authority to decide how often it should meet. Since the Board has not approved the Commission's meeting frequency, we cannot comment on the number of meetings the Commission held during the review period. For the 13 meetings the Commission held, we noted that an average of 3.4 (68%) members were present.

The Commission's average attendance is **SATISFACTORY.**

**Sections 3 and 4. Accomplishments and Results.** (Are listed accomplishments and results significant?)

During the review period, the Commission's accomplishments included:

- Consulting with the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) regarding historic preservation programs in other cities, methods of identifying historical

structures/resources, historic preservation ordinances, and the feasibility of establishing a Mills Act program (Program) for the unincorporated areas of the County. The Program allows local governments to contract with owners of qualified historic properties for property tax relief in exchange for restoring and maintaining their historic properties. On May 28, 2013, the Board indicated its intent to amend the County Code to establish the Program and to authorize the Commission to comment on the Program's guidelines and application materials.

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- Commenting for the Board on the application for the Bass House to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Reviewing and approving, per the Environmental Impact Report approved by the Board, the design development plans for the Golden Gate Theater in the unincorporated area of East Los Angeles for consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Commission's accomplishments and results are **SIGNIFICANT**.

**Section 5. Objectives.** (Are the objectives compatible with the mission and goals and relevant within the current County environment?)

The Commission's objectives for the next review period are to:

- Consult with DRP regarding the application materials and guidelines for the Program.
- Develop guidelines for recommending memorial plaques to the Board.
- Continue to recommend to the Board local historical landmarks worthy of designation as a "California Historical Landmark" or as a "California Point of Historical Interest," and commenting for the Board on applications relating to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Commission's future objectives appear **RELEVANT**.

**Section 6. Resources.** (Are the resources utilized by the entity in support of the entity's activities warranted in terms of the accomplishments and results?)

Commission members are not compensated for their service. The Executive Office of the Board estimates that they spent approximately \$1,140 for staff support, parking, and services and supplies during Fiscal Year 2010-11.

The Commission's expenses appear to be **WARRANTED**.

**Section 7. Recommendation.**

**EXTEND THE SUNSET REVIEW DATE FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY HISTORICAL LANDMARKS AND RECORDS COMMISSION TO JUNE 30, 2018.**